ISSUE #2

PERSPECTIVES

A PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS

SHRINKING RESOURCES SPARKS REGIONAL COLLABORATION

| Tyler Havens & Alex Snowden

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LYNDA WILEY Q&A

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LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

I attended a presentation once where the speaker asked everyone in the room who was wearing a watch to move it from the wrist they normally wore it on to the other wrist. It might be helpful to point out that before iPhones people wore watches more often. The speaker then continued with his remarks. A few minutes later, he asked us how many of us had switched our watch back to the "regular" wrist where we usually wear it. A significant amount of hands in the room were raised. This example demonstrated change is hard. People do not always like change or feel comfortable with change, and it is often an easy habit to fall back into our usual or familiar ways.

Right now, change is occurring for both me and our Association. I recently accepted the role of Director in the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life at Cornell University, where I have been since 2006. Even moving to a new physical space made me nostalgic for my old office. However, I have chosen to embrace the new, the unknown, and the change. Furthermore, since I have been at my institution for almost 11 years it would be easy to keep things as they have always been, but instead I am leading our staff to identify what we can stop doing, start doing, redevelop, etc. No idea is off limits.

Similarly, AFA's new Executive Director, Dr. Lynda Wiley began her role in mid-June. I am incredibly impressed with Lynda, and I believe she will guide AFA to even greater success. This edition will give you an opportunity to get to know our talented new leader even better. And I envision she will identify changes we can make as an Association. I encourage us to also embrace this change and innovation.

There is one thing we need to remember about change. Failure is okay. I write this in the context that we can sometimes be thwarted, or held back, because we are afraid we may try something new that may not work. Correct. True. It may not. Every new idea, or approach, has not always been successful. However, I would argue we have always learned from it, and then created the next and better version as a follow up to the original idea. Henry Ford remarked, "Failure provides the opportunity to begin again, more intelligently." We, too, must keep thinking, trying, and planning. I hope the summer allows time for personal rejuvenation as well as opportunities for creativity, and the generation of new ideas for our next academic year.

Kara S. Miller, President

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Change is not a foreign concept for those of us who work in fraternity and sorority life. We talk about it, read about it, teach sessions on it, and enact it all the time. However, this issue gives us an opportunity to pause to think about what type of change we are driving forward.

Some changes result in a rearrangement of what currently exists—a symbolic effort. The French novelist Jean-Baptiste Karr summed this up when he coined the phrase "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Efforts to enact change that actually reinforce the status quo can make real life feel like a Dilbert cartoon. Frustration and cynicism can be elicited with the mere mention of a change initiative. However, sometimes change can result in something else; sometimes the outcome can be absurdity.

There are countless examples of changes, innovations and advancements that have dictated something becoming absurd. The thought of people smoking on an airplane, once commonplace, now seems utterly ridiculous. It was not long ago that the idea of jumping into a complete stranger's car for a ride across town, or renting a room in someone else's home for your vacation, would seem absurd. We can find examples of the winners and losers of absurdity based on the things we have used, and do use, in our lives. The winners become a feature in Fast Company highlighting their new multi-billion dollar company. While the losers find themselves with plenty of free time to roam the aisles of Blockbuster Video looking for a video to pop in the VCR.

All this prompts two questions. First, what could we make absurd in the fraternity and sorority world? Second, could fraternities and sororities become an absurd idea on a college campus? It seems likely that the answer to the second question will, in large part, be determined by how we answer the first. We continue to face significant challenges. They are deep rooted, complex and long-standing. Meaningful impact will not be enacted through changes that result in more of the same. Meaningful change will require hard questions and even harder work. Could it become absurd to think about seeing hard alcohol in a chapter house? Could chapter houses themselves become a ridiculous notion? Could a new chapter servicing model become a game changer?

The path toward rendering something absurd can seem daunting. Our authors in this issue are here to help us start our journey. They provide us with frameworks for generating change. They also show us best practices and new innovations we can learn from. Most importantly, they give us an opportunity to start looking at our work with a new question in mind.

What do you want to make absurd?

Emilee Danielson-Burke & Noah Borton
Co-Editors

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We celebrate our contributions to the field. Kudos to James Ehrmann for contributing to #AFAPerspectives! I see you sir! #BeGreekUMN #UMNProud

Keith D. Garcia @kgarcia_sa

#AdvanceU The May edition of #AFAEssentials was also about transitions if folks want to check that out while looking at #AFAPerspectives

Amne Harrington @missamne

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Change is a *verb*

ALLISON FOSTER / LIZ MAZOROWICZ

Change is a verb.

This small verb is used to make a great impact through work with students, fraternal organizations, and campuses. Professionals often transform that small verb into the noun "change agent." Professionals become change agents when they lead tremendous change in organizations or on a campus. Change has come up frequently in the political arena with more visibility in the form of the word activism, as individuals fight for what they believe. As leaders, committed professionals aspire to create positive change around them, always moving toward a better experience, environment or self. However, there are distinct ways change should be approached, whether leading it, or living through it, which can make it more effective.

Professionals in student affairs, and within fraternity and sorority advising, tell students how critical it is to be a change agent on their campus and in their organization. Students are challenged to stand for what is right, live a values based life, and to be a values based organization. Student affairs professionals are well versed in teaching students tactics for creating and responding to change. However, when those same professionals experience change within their own environment they frequently respond with resistance.

It can be difficult to teach others to create change when one is doing so from a place of resistance to change. This dissonance between what professionals teach students versus how they may respond to change provides the impetus for this article. Several theoretical concepts related to change address this difference between the approach, and the response, to change.

When acting as the *change agent:*

Change or Die (Deutschman, 2007), includes a strong approach to creating sustainable change. Used as a model with students, it can help them understand how to inspire change. The text also identifies the psychological challenges to change which cause people to struggle with it.

There are three focus areas for inspiring change:

1. ***Relate:*** Forming a new relationship or connection to help inspire hope and see change as an attainable reality.
2. ***Repeat:*** The process of learning and practicing the new habits needed to create and sustain the change.
3. ***Reframe:*** The new ways of thinking or acting become natural and permanent to one's life.

This framework can guide effective change. In particular, the "repeat" concept speaks to what environmental change teaches. Individuals are directed to look beyond those who are asking to implement new behavior to see how the desired change is supported by the surrounding environment. The repeat stage requires individuals to move from buying into the change, to learning how to practice something new. This often removes people from a comfortable environment toward one they have never explored before. In short, a comfort zone and everyone who lived there is no longer an option, and individuals have to seek out people and places that support the change they are working toward.

In an ideal state, the change agent can see all of the outcomes, knows where the individuals and groups are going, and sets the course to ensure change happens at an attainable pace. In *Leading Change,* John P. Kotter (1996) discusses the role of the crisis to "catch people's attention, and [push] up urgency levels." However, there is not always a crisis around the corner that can be planned on to inspire change. Kotter approaches change for leaders from a perspective of utilizing visions, strategies, plans, and budgets.

While *Change or Die* creates a strong framework, Kotter helps fill in the pieces critical to creating a change. The concept of "relate" and inspiring change should be accompanied by a vision regarding the desired change. The vision needs to provide clarification for the direction of the change, motivate those involved, and coordinate the desired actions. In the absence of a vision, individuals can lack investment. The vision needs to be clear. Nothing can be more frustrating for the individual participating in the change than not understanding where the change is leading the group or organization. The vision needs to be feasible. Dreaming of a seemingly impossible future is one way to approach change, but, when the vision is actually impossible, individuals will lack the ability to buy-in. Creating and inspiring a vision people can understand requires confidence and planning. A vision is not achieved by accident.

Strategy is the next step after a vision is determined. This step can often be forgotten, yet it is essential to consider with regards to change. Both Kotter, as well as Bossidy and Charan (2002) discuss the importance of strategy. In *Change or Die*, this shows up in the form of Psych Concepts. The bottom line for strategy is allowing for the vision to be understood and accomplished. It is the people management portion of change. People need to understand what they are doing in order to buy-in and aid in the accomplishment of change. Often people jump from an idea to action without strategy or context. Without information, individuals do not know how, or why, their action aligns with the vision they are working toward. This can result in resistance, which is what can make achieving change very difficult.

It takes a large amount of effort to create change. Frequently, it is the same elements helping individuals find success in creating change that can in turn make it difficult for people to experience change being exerted upon them.

When experiencing the verb, *change:*

Often, the reality is people, people don't respond well to change. Leaders fail to follow the strategies discussed previously in this article. Additionally, professionals, as change agents in the fraternal world and student affairs, are often those people who do not respond well to change. Individuals may be aware they are experiencing change, yet are the resisters who make the process more difficult for those leading the change.

> "*Change is not a verb people can experience passively.*"

This resistance can occur because any type of change is accompanied by a loss of control and feelings of uncertainty (Moss Kanter, 2012). When experiencing change, everything feels different. As creatures of habit, departing from the norm can keep one from moving forward. A large degree of uncertainty can halt change, even when the change is necessary. Most people prefer to tolerate a problem or system they understand how to navigate, rather than adopting a new concept forcing them to learn something new.

A need for competence is a huge barrier to adopting change. People like to feel as though they are good at what they do. Professionally and personally, big changes come with a steep learning curve. Adopting a change means having the ability to confront the fear a person's skills might not adjust to be successful in a new environment (Moss Kanter, 2012).

Understand and recognizing these potential barriers when individuals are experiencing the verb "change" could make a response more productive. When an individual is resisting change, and it is a change they believe in, they should take a step back to see if one of the aforementioned areas (uncertainty, the learning curve, fear of adjusting skills) is preventing them from being a healthy participant in the change.

Responding to change requires work (Mass Kanter, 2012). It is not the effort most are afraid of. It is the fear they might not be successful after learning something new that is not a part of their routine. Change is a verb people cannot experience passively.

How can leaders better react to *change* based on what leaders know and do when acting as a *change agent?*

Change is difficult. Creating a vision or adopting a new vision is not a process that is simple for any individual, group, or society as a whole.

Change or Die (Deutschman, 2007) includes a number of psychological concepts that give context to how individuals respond to change. Whether experiencing change or leading change, there are three important concepts to keep in mind which can help create success.

Generate small wins: Small wins encourage belief. Building an environment allowing one to see small positive change can encourage yourself, and others, to continue embracing all the difficult tasks, new skills, and frustrated emotions associated with change.

Power of community and culture: Community is something which already exists in higher education, and more than likely within a campus community. When tackling change, tell people. Even if the individual feels as though it will fail, tap into available support networks. Embracing this can create a culture where new efforts are celebrated, and the difficult parts of a change process are encouraged.

Acting as if: When all else fails, a leader can "fake it until they make it." Fear of incompetence and the unknown are natural. Being able to have internal confidence and articulate that fear to others is a way to overcome it. Soon, faking looks like doing, learning looks like mastering, and eventually, individuals arrive at "make it" in the form of a successfully achieved vision.

Visioning, strategizing, and action planning are critical steps to ensure when serving as a change agent, a leader can establish a road to success. Successful change requires taking into account the environment, and the players in it. Also, realizing there is fear involved in change can help ease into the resistance that may be faced along the way. Change is a small verb. Change agent is a big title. Both take work, confidence, and commitment and are integral to the work done within the fraternal world everyday.

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Creating & sustaining:

Keys to Initiating Effective Change

| RYAN KIGHT

If changing an individual feels hard, changing an organization seems practically impossible. After all, organizational change occurs when numerous individuals change; a process that can feel laborious and impossible. Yet, as leaders, our ability to drive organizational change is essential to stay relevant and competitive. The complexity is not only driving change, but getting it to last. A 2013 survey by Towers-Watson found only 25% of change management initiatives sustained over the long term (Watson, 2013).

In my professional life, I am a department leader for Edward Jones Investments. Edwards Jones operates a branch network of over 14,000 financial advisors and Branch Office Administrators (BOAs). The combination of advisors and administrators are called branch teams. Our department, which I co-lead, builds performance management tools and resources directing the work of the over 20,000 BOAs to do their work differently so they can support our clients and financial advisors based on evolving needs. To add to the complexity of our work, we do not have direct authority over either the financial advisors or the BOAs, yet we are responsible for getting them to do things differently. Effectively, the only tool in our toolbox is strong change management in order to drive adoption.

When looking for support in how to drive organizational change, there are literally thousands of articles, quotes, and quips. Among those are numerous models for change theory including Kotter's 8 Steps, Bridges' Transition Model, Lewin's Change Model and Prosci's ADKAR Change Management Model. With so many great support resources, my focus in this article is to share examples we have found to be effective in driving change in our work at Edward Jones.

We believe the following have been been vital to our success:

1. **Having the right leaders visibly supporting the change**
2. **Having a project plan and a change plan from the beginning**
3. **Building "for the field, by the field"**

These concepts, among others, have helped us drive remarkable change and adoption results, including BOAs completing 40% more performance activities, and a 120% increase in another internal performance metric.

Key 1:
HAVE THE RIGHT LEADERS SUPPORT THE CHANGE

Early in my career at Edward Jones, I proposed a different way for our newest financial advisors to build relationships with potential clients and was encouraged to assemble a small team to build the idea. The idea was simple and rooted in common sense but was different than how things were done in the past. The team built out the idea, but before we could implement, we encountered resistance from more senior leaders in our area.Could this change damage relationships with our potential clients? Would the new financial advisors know what to do? Would this even add value or work? We attempted to overcome these obstacles, but in the end we were forced to implement a much diluted version of the idea. I quickly learned having the right level of leadership support is vital to driving successful change.

Now, we have a sponsor who visibly advocates for the changes we build, both to our home office and to our financial advisors and BOAs. Furthermore, she helps us create advocacy across the organization including our most senior-level leaders. We have learned that the bigger the change, the higher the level of leaders we need involved. However, having senior leaders advocate alone is not enough. To truly drive success, you need leaders at all levels to support the change. Due to the significant size and nature of the work we do today, we have numerous leaders throughout the organization bought into the change who utilize multiple steering groups and roadshows. We seek their feedback from the very beginning which helps them feel involved in our work and helps us identify potential roadblocks. As we move from project-development to project-implementation (i.e. change management), these leaders become critical advocates who help us incorporate it into their work, thus reinforcing the change. Additionally, these leaders become essential in driving support from front-line leaders who can ensure the support of their teams.

Key 2:

HAVE A PROJECT PLAN AND A CHANGE PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING

In 2014, I co-led a project to build a new tool that would help our financial advisors identify potential clients who were in greatest need of their help. This increased both efficiency and effectiveness. We assembled our project team and got to work creating the tool. We spent weeks identifying what the tool would do, how it would work, what were the rules, etc. Then, a significant amount of time and money was utilized to build the tool. As we neared completion, questions were raised: "How will they learn this? How will they be aware it exists?" We hastily put together a training and communication plan largely focused on "informing" the financial advisors of the tool. When it came time to launch, we received pushback on the rules we had established and there was confusion on who should be using the tool. Sadly, the tool received low adoption. Shortly after rollout, usage reports showed only 300 of our over 14,000 financial advisors used the tool regularly. A tool we believed would help the financial advisors work smarter, and not harder, seemed to fall short of what it could have done.

I suspect this story sounds familiar: a great idea, a focused effort to build on a short timeline, a last minute plan for informing, followed by low adoption. If your new idea was not optional, you probably received significant resistance and negative feedback. Too often we spend significant time planning the "what" but fail to put as much effort into the "how". A change plan really is an implementation plan and to be successful, you must consider both: what are we wanting people to do differently and how will they be successful? In my work today, we have team's dedicated to both the what (Strategy Development) and the how (Change and Communication). These groups partner together from the start and build a project plan and a change plan at the same time.

Our change plan takes the approach that implementation is a process, not a destination. Therefore the team identifies numerous places to embed messaging over the course of several months and look for opportunities to reinforce our key messages over and over again. We also think about how to engage all levels of the Firm's leaders in supporting and reinforcing the message by coaching and training their teams. We are also thoughtful about resistance. Even the best change will have people who oppose it; which is not a negative. However, planning for multiple feedback loops and then having plans to implement changes makes a big difference.

Key 3:

BUILD "FOR THE FIELD, BY THE FIELD"

Another key to our success has been to ask, not assume. We rely on numerous research insights to shape our thinking including our clients, our top branch teams, and ad hoc surveys and focus groups depending on the change we are driving. We use the insights to shape what we build and to shape our messaging for implementation.

We have found that while we often know a lot about the change, there are always surprises. In 2016, we built and released objective performance measures for the role we supported for the first time. Prior to, this role only had subjective measures. We were moving forward with calling the screen "Performance Measures." However, one week prior to the launch, we received forceful feedback from our advisory groups that this language was too strong for an initial launch. We hastily assembled a conference call and listened to their concerns. It became clear sticking with that name would give us significant challenges during rollout and would have distracted the users from the true intent of the screen. We made a last minute change to call it "Summary Screen".

Peter Drucker, the founder of modern management, is quoted as saying to Edward Jones leaders "don't assume when you can get the facts." While instincts are easier and faster, we have found the insights help us build a better solution and shape a better rollout that improves adoption.

In the Fraternal World

In 2016, I was Vice President of Administration for Theta Xi Fraternity's National Board of Directors. We recognized a need for a new fee structure to support the Fraternity going forward. Theta Xi requires the Convention – an assembly of undergraduates and alumni – to approve all fees restructures. Past changes were contentious and consumed significant debate time while people argued the need and validity of the change. As VP of Administration, I was responsible for the change, and I was determined this would be different. With the help of our National President, I assembled a team of alumni volunteers each who had a specific reason to be on the team based on other volunteer roles in the Fraternity, familiarity with financial matters, geography, chapter-size representation, etc. This group researched and developed three different working models that in turn were socialized with our chapter's presidents. Additionally, we presented our initial version of "why this is necessary" - the value case. The feedback was instrumental in helping us narrow on the actual model we would propose. Additionally, the feedback helped us improve our value case. As we continued to build, we conducted further surveys and bounced our thinking off a small number of undergraduates. Knowing surprise changes face significant resistance, we looked for numerous opportunities to share the value case and the proposal to more undergraduates throughout the year leading up to the Convention.

At the Convention, we worked to embed value case points in all of the reports being delivered by the National President and staff. There was consistent and frequent messaging aligned to the research we had conducted. The committee decided to put two options before the convention to give them choice. When the time came for the vote, we spent 45 minutes debating the two options before a vote was called and unanimously passed one of the new fee restructures.

There was no ugly debate on the merits for the change, and there were no last minute efforts to eliminate it. We had a civil debate on two options and moved quickly to approve a much needed change. I attribute this to the committee's focus on: having the right leaders support the change, having a plan that considered change from the beginning, and building for the chapters, by the chapters.

These principles are simple but difficult to execute consistently. In the day-to-day need to move quickly, it is easy to try and execute without taking these steps. While that may save you time on the front end, it will create considerable more work on the back end trying to recover from resistance or low adoption. Additionally, increased risk exists by trying to recover from negative publicity, making adopting your new idea even more difficult. In my day job, we have found success in considering adoption from the beginning to increase our adoption and success.

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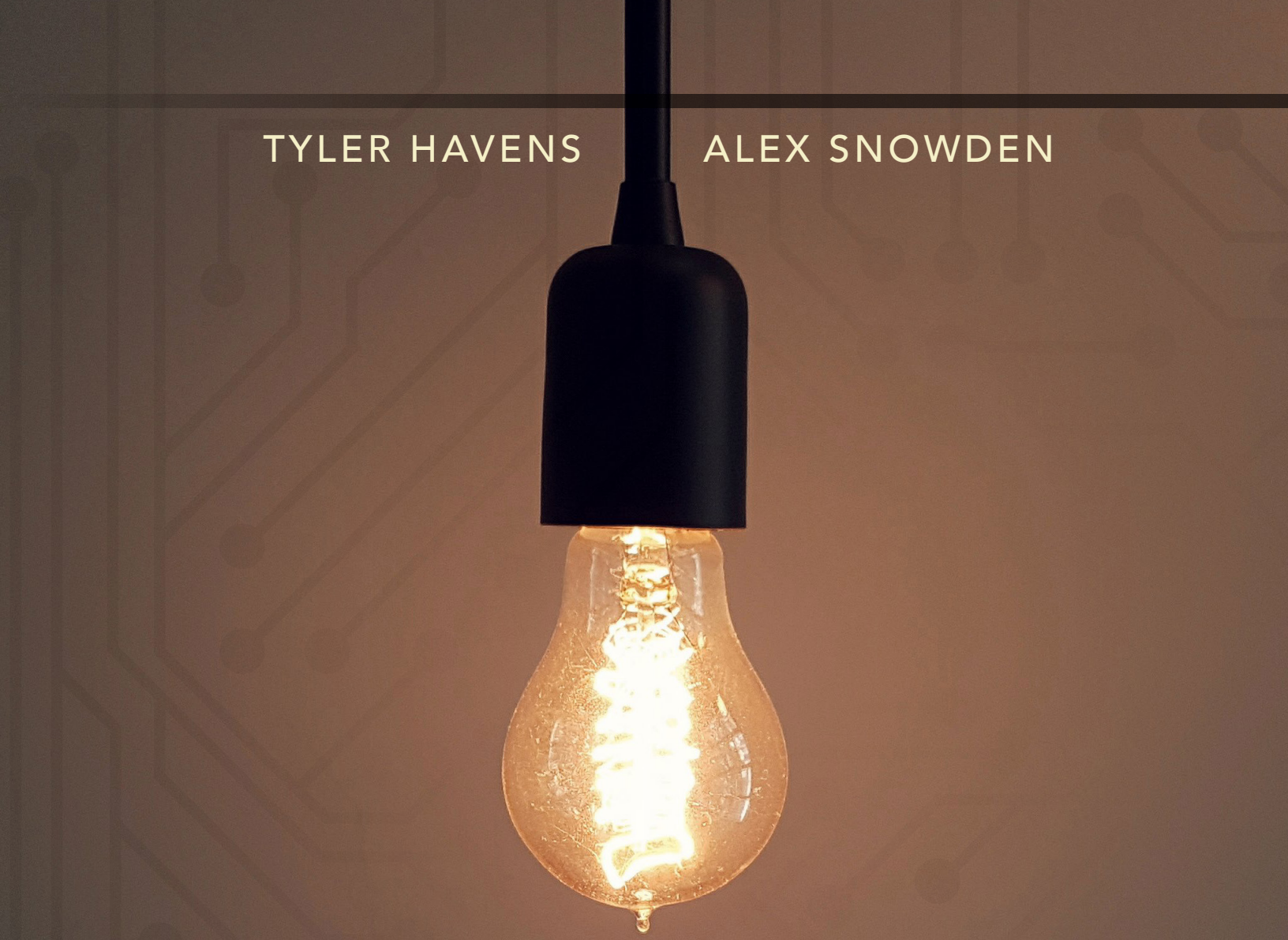
TYLER HAVENS ALEX SNOWDEN



shrinking resources

sparks

regional collaboration

Responding Externally for Fraternal Support

Budget cuts within higher education seem to be a time honored tradition. Institutions are facing fiscal challenges due to decreasing enrollments, rising costs of resources, and lack of state and federal funding. The state of Illinois, for example, is approaching its third fiscal year without an approved budget. Without having an approved budget releasing public dollars, institutions have been forced to rely on unknown sums of "stop gap funding." This funding source is crucial for institutions to continue basic operations. However, according to the Chicago Tribune, these stop gaps barely made a dent. For example, Northern Illinois University operated at $26.4 million dollars for the year, although the university typically operates at $91 million dollars per year (Rhodes, 2017).

These fiscal challenges force institutions to identify alternative cost saving measures. Some alternative measures utilized are choosing not to "front" monies for regularly funded student state aid in the hopes of being reimbursed by the state; staff taking mandatory furloughs; reducing some staff and administrative positions from twelve month positions to ten or eleven month positions; extended term interim executive positions; and in some cases, the elimination of positions, entirely. In addition, shrinking or nonexistent funding also impacts staff availability for students. The uncertainty of these factors has caused the morale of both staff and students to plummet.

A common response to these cuts can be professionals shutting down, or throwing their hands up and saying, "I guess, I will deal with it." In Illinois, a different solution has emerged combining the collaboration of colleagues with a desire to overcome obstacles. The Central Illinois Fraternity and Sorority Advisor Coalition brings together professionals from public and private institutions to form an approach to overcome budgetary impasses and other shrinking resources. This coalition helps advisors grow professionally while striving to support fraternal communities across the state.

In the summer of 2015, fraternity and sorority professionals from the central Illinois region came together to support one another during these financially difficult times. A meeting was held to create the Central Illinois Fraternity and Sorority Advisor Coalition. The discussions identified universal needs across campuses. The need for risk reduction programming, new member development, expansion/extension, management of databases, and leadership development were common themes. The easy solution to many of these problems is to host a speaker or purchase a developed program. This option is not always available, however, when funding is limited. At the initial meeting, a comment was made eluding to need for another professional to be "the expert" for students needing to hear a different voice stating the same issue their campus advisor had already stated. This statement was the spark that created solutions.

One solution was to utilize professionals in the Coalition to present to other campuses, at cost or for smaller fees, through the use of different technologies. This would help the professional grow by developing their presentation skills, fine-tuning their message, and reaching students from another perspective at a rate that was affordable. These discussions led to the concept of "lightning talks" from around the region. Lightening talks would be live or pre-recorded talks that would be accessible to all campuses around the region discussing various topics. The talks would provide an opportunity for students to hear from professionals on different campuses to address and discuss similar issues among campuses.

Additionally, the group explored opportunities for student governing council leadership to connect through various technologies. Having the opportunity for peer-to-peer connection to build unity among the region would allow students to pool resources in combating some of the issues faced by fraternity/sorority life. In creating these relationships, multi-campus programs, initiatives, and opportunities for leadership development would receive more buy-in from students, as these students want to meet and interact to facilitate these discussions.

After forming the concept of developing relationships among the campus councils, the Coalition discussed how to deliver traditional programs in a nontraditional way. Conventionally, to offer a nationally recognized leadership development program, a campus would be required to host their own students and provide scholarships for students to attend. Thus, the Coalition explored the alternative option of regionally hosting a program to develop relationships among students through a shared experience. This option would also allow for shared costs. Then, the Coalition discussed the possibility of hosting a homegrown leadership program for students within their region that would be affordable to campus officers and would not compete with other nationally or regionally recognized programs. The Coalition even evaluated sharing travel across the region to attend conferences so no one school would be burdened with the cost of travel.

The benefits of the Coalition extend beyond the students to the professional staff as well. This group provides networking opportunities, presentation experiences, opportunities to explore new topics for research, and support all around the region. The Coalition has also developed an outlet for sharing resources using different technologies that has been useful to all involved. These resources have included "Lightning Talks," assessment program templates, and templates for common letters sent to students or chapters.

The Central Illinois Fraternity and Sorority Advisor Coalition serves as an example for future collaborative efforts which can help institutions respond in the wake of diminishing state aid. Transparency with how dollars are spent, finding ways to reduce or eliminate duplicate programs, and including many stakeholders in these efforts will help to ensure success in new collaborative endeavors. As a result, rather than attempting to do more with less as resources are reduced, advisors and campus communities will have the opportunity to do less with less through greater efficiency in campus programming. There are a number of means whereby this can be accomplished. Professionals just have to explore opportunities that exist on their campuses, communities, and regions. When change is forced, for whatever reason it, is difficult to adapt. Due to this, professionals and students, alike, need to be resilient in the face of change, rather than resistant to it.

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Alex Snowden serves as the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life at Illinois State University. He received his undergraduate degree from Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi and Masters degree from Illinois State University. He is currently pursuing his PhD from Illinois State University. Alex serves as the incoming NASPA FSL Knowledge Community Co-Chair and volunteers for AFA. Alex is a brother of Beta Theta Pi.

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A LOOK BACK AT FOUR YEARS:

CHANGING POLICIES TO IMPROVE A COMMUNITY

MICHAEL D. GIACALONE

Rhode Island College (RIC), located in Providence, RI, has a student population that is 85 percent commuter. Similar to many peer institutions, most RIC students work multiple jobs and have a variety of off-campus responsibilities in addition to their studies (Jacoby, 2000). Fraternity and sorority life has existed at RIC for about 10 years. I am the first full-time person to oversee fraternity and sorority life, but prior to me, there were two (excellent) part-time staff members working with our community. When I arrived four years ago, there was a recently disbanded Greek Council, a newly formed Sorority Council, one local sorority that had just affiliated with a national organization, another starting the affiliation process, and two fraternities - with eight members combined. A lot was happening, but change needed to occur, and be managed effectively, for our community to improve. This required a shift in both policy and practice.

MANAGING CHANGE

Working with a changing organization, like any skillset, requires the proverbial toolkit from which to draw techniques, ideas and theories that could be helpful. Below are brief descriptions of two models of change I have used with our community and how I implemented them. As with any theory-to-practice discussion, what this looks like within individual communities is going to be different from one campus to another. Therefore, what I present is not the solution, but rather a solution to consider.

• KOTTER'S EIGHT-STAGE PROCESS

John Kotter (1996) analyzed successful organizational change initiatives over the course of 15 years to develop his model.

The model requires working with others to create strategy, vision and action plans that are reinforced within the new culture. While the sequence is laid out in stages, leaders of change initiatives often work through multiple stages at a time. Kotter, however, warned against skipping any of the stages if an organization wants to ensure change occurs and lasts. This is the primary model I utilize when working through a change process. I am going to specifically highlight our work regarding the second stage, "create a guiding coalition."

> "Including chapter leaders in the policy development process has created buy-in within the community."

This change initiative began with the belief that a successful community requires effective engagement of all partners including headquarters, advisors, and institutional offices. Including these partners in our change is the essence of this stage in Kotter's model.

In the RIC community this has been accomplished in two ways. The first is through regular communication with chapters, faculty, staff, and alumni advisors. These communications include updates about what is happening within the community and the broader college landscape impacting chapters. The second tactic has been to engage chapter and council leaders in policy changes. Part of an annual summer leadership retreat includes a meeting with chapter presidents to discuss and refine potential policy changes. Including chapter leaders in the policy development process has created buy-in within the community.

• SCHEIN'S STAGES OF LEARNING

Encountering and adapting to unfamiliar policies is part of any new job. One policy at RIC needing evauation was related to recruitment. Men could join fraternities in their first semester while women had to wait to join sororities until their second semester. Considering commuter students have a difficult time connecting with the campus (Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2011), which is an important piece of retention (Tinto, 1987), it did not make sense to have students wait for an opportunity to engage with the campus community. After some digging it was discovered the Sorority Council enacted this policy because they believed their new members did not perform well academically, and many left the sorority before new member education was over. Since there is a campus GPA requirement in order to join a fraternity or sorority, I did not believe this was problem with who they were recruiting, but rather it was a problem with the recruitment and new member education. It should be noted, at this point not all of the organizations within the RIC community were affiliated with national organizations, so there was little oversight of the programs.

Schein's (2010) stages of learning include providing disconfirming information to motivate change, learning new information and processes, and then continuing to support the changes made. This was the process utilized to address the concerns regarding recruitment policies. To start, there was no real data to support the assertion that new members' grades and retention were long-term issues. So I had to look through old records to find that information and provide a base for comparison after we created the change. An analysis of the data revealed little difference in academic performance between first-semester recruitment and deferred recruitment. This result provided the disconfirmation needed to get the council to agree to switch from deferred to first-semester recruitment.

Learning new information and processes started prior to recruitment. We had discussions about how to convey accurate requirements, expectations, and costs to the potential new members during recruitment. The objective was to prevent new members from dropping because they received inaccurate information about membership. Academic progress reports, and a process for tracking success for new members, were created as a part of new member education. In addition, chapters were connected with campus academic resources. The changes have been supported, and continued, through the annual officer transitions and clear expectations about our newly formed Panhellenic Council's responsibilities.

CHANGE AS A CONTINUAL PROCESS

We have come a long way from when I first arrived on campus. While we now have better policies and practices to support a fraternity and sorority life program, we are far from perfect. The majority of our organizations need to increase their membership. Our council officers need more development. The fraternity and sorority alumni base is a budding but growing group, so we need to figure out how to engage them in other ways. These challenges will require continued change in policy and practice to be addressed. Throughout my four years at RIC, change has occurred incrementally, so while we may only see a small difference semester-to-semester, the change over the last four years has been quite significant.

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QUESTIONS TO HELP GUIDE SUCCESSFUL HOUSING PROJECTS

JOHN MOUNTZ / CARL WINSTEAD

It is probably a fair statement that chapter housing, and more specifically construction and renovation, is not a core job component for most campus professionals. With almost 49 percent of chapter housing built prior to 1949, and an additional 30 percent built between 1950 and 1974, chances are housing will become an item on the agenda at some point. This could involve an institutional project, or an alumni house corporation may request assistance from the institution on a major construction project. What issues might groups face and what resources are available? In what ways can a campus professional help a group of alumni volunteers get organized and pointed in the right direction? While fraternity and sorority advisors may not have all the answers, they can be equipped with some level of understanding which will give them confidence in serving as a proactive supporter for housing projects.

WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

It is possible many local boards have struggles recruiting and retaining volunteers. These challenges are exacerbated when conducting a major renovation or construction project due to the tremendous effort it will require from volunteers. The first step, before looking for an architect or a building site, is to make sure the right people are on the team. A successful project team consists of key volunteers who bring specific skill sets to the table and who are empowered to make critical decisions. Volunteers with backgrounds in finance, design, construction, and fundraising are vital to the success of the project. Whether they operate as a separate 'capital project team' or as a subset of the house corporation, starting a project without these individuals is not advisable.

After assembling a team of volunteers, it is time to consider bringing in outside experts both for their specific knowledge and the ability to move the project ahead. Groups can spend years in the "planning phase" largely due to they are all volunteers and few are able to dedicate full-time attention to a project. While outside consultants clearly come with a price, they can essentially pay for themselves by keeping a project on time and avoiding costly delays and mistakes.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES?

Any project can get bogged down at one point or another simply because the players involved cannot agree on what they are trying to accomplish. Developing a clear vision for the project is essential and must be done with all the key stakeholders involved. House corporation officers and undergraduate leaders are always the first to be considered. However, it is important to ask who else can contribute to this process? Consider how input from campus administrators, city planners, general alumni/ae, and even parents might add value to the project. A forward-thinking board should ask, "What trends are influencing student housing for the next 40 years, and who else should be included in this conversation?"

It is important for groups to be honest about what the future of the facility should be. A vision that misses key items during design only to discover these during construction is more than an inconvenience. Here are several important questions to consider:

- Will they be the only group on campus to have food service?
- Are members going to find a quad room appealing?
- Do they have to design suite-style or club bathrooms?
- Have they put the study room in the wrong place?
- Do their members even want to live there?
- How will this project help with recruitment?

A solid housing plan has answers for each of these questions and encourages consistent reflection on the vision as more questions arise.

What can actually be built on the proposed site also needs to be clarified. What limitations exist due to zoning or special exemptions? How will the project meet code requirements around parking or life safety? Will they have to request variances given the property's location in a historic neighborhood? What concerns exist around safety and security for chapter members? All of these questions if answered early, allow a group to move into design and construction with a minimum of "oops" moments.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Every project comes down to one primary factor, the budget. While how much can a group afford sounds like a simple question, there are a multitude of factors contributing to establishing a clear budget. Here are several questions to consider regarding the budget:

- How much cash is readily available?
- How much money can be raised and by when?
- How much debt service will the future operational budget support?
- What does it actually cost to build the proposed facility?

It is easy to envision a grand new house with a big front porch, grand stairwell, and lots of space for chapter events. It is another thing to realize the list of 'must haves' is simply not affordable. There is a moment on the HGTV show *Property Brothers* when Drew and Jonathan Scott, the hosts of the show, take the unsuspecting homebuyers on a tour of a finished house that checks every box on their wish list. Then, they reveal a price tag which is far beyond the proposed budget. It is similarly easy for an alumni board to develop a housing wishlist which far exceeds their realistic budget. However, proper planning can help an alumni board avoid the type of deflating moment the home buyers experience on *Property Brothers.*

There are two documents every house corporation must complete to successfully take on this scale of a project. The first is a Capital Project Budget that clearly accounts for both the funding, and the cost of the total project. This is where many groups experience their first sticker shock moment. It is easy to look at a new $4 million dollar construction project and wonder what contributes to that number. Beyond the pure construction costs lie costs for design, permitting, inspections, insurance, and furnishings. The budget must also account for funding sources. How much cash on hand can be brought to the project? Will the organization borrow money, and how much will that contribute to the project? How much money will come from a capital fundraising campaign? These are questions that must be addressed in the conceptual phase, before an architect gets into the actual design of the project.

HOW WILL THE ORGANIZATION PAY FOR IT?

The second document is a 10-Year Operating Proforma. This is a projection that essentially shows what the revenue and expense budget will look like for the first ten years the new house is in operation. While it sounds daunting, building a Proforma is an exercise in creating a future budget based on solid assumptions. First, how much revenue will the operation generate from all sources including resident rent, meal plans, out-of-house fees, and the member fees? Here it is necessary to build a competitive rate structure that is compared to residence halls and other fraternity housing. Rates and fees should be projected to increase by a consistent annual percentage with the goal of adequately funding the operational needs while remaining affordable for the members.

> "THE REALITY FOR MANY GROUPS IS THEY ARE FACING SOME CRITICAL DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR HOUSING SITUATION"

Second, what will it cost to operate the building in terms of regular operating expenses like utilities, insurance, and food costs, as well as service the annual debt on the building? These two documents, the Capital Project Budget and the 10-Year Operating Proforma, are the tools that can be used to make tough decisions on what the organization will eventually build and how it will operate. The assumptions must be realistic and should be verified throughout the process. These become the core of the business plan that will be used by a lending institution to determine the viability financing this project, so a good organization makes sure these budget estimates are accurate and realistic.

HOW DOES THE ORGANIZATION MOVE FORWARD?

Once a group has answered those first four questions, the most difficult one left is how does the project move forward from plan to action? If they have really completed their homework, and answered all those questions, then moving forward means pulling all the information together into a clear, concise packet of information and sharing that product with the right people. They can use this as part of their fundraising efforts or to engage alumni volunteers. It can be used to explain to undergraduates why it may be three years until the new house opens. The documents will also be used by the project's architects, contractors, and financiers to make crucial decisions throughout the design/build process.

The reality for many groups is they are facing some critical decisions about their housing situation. Whether the plan is to renovate, expand, or build new, every housing project comes with its own set of unique challenges and potential solutions. As a campus professional, your days are filled with consultations, advising, and lots of decisions. Although most of those will not involve housing, when the opportunity arises, the fraternity/sorority advisor will want to make sure they can provide the organization with good direction. A bad decision on housing can be a drain on even the best of chapters. This can then become an issue for the campus based advisor and even the institution. If all parties share a goal to ensure future generations can have exceptional chapter living/learning experiences, then everyone can find ways to contribute to a successful project when the opportunity arises.

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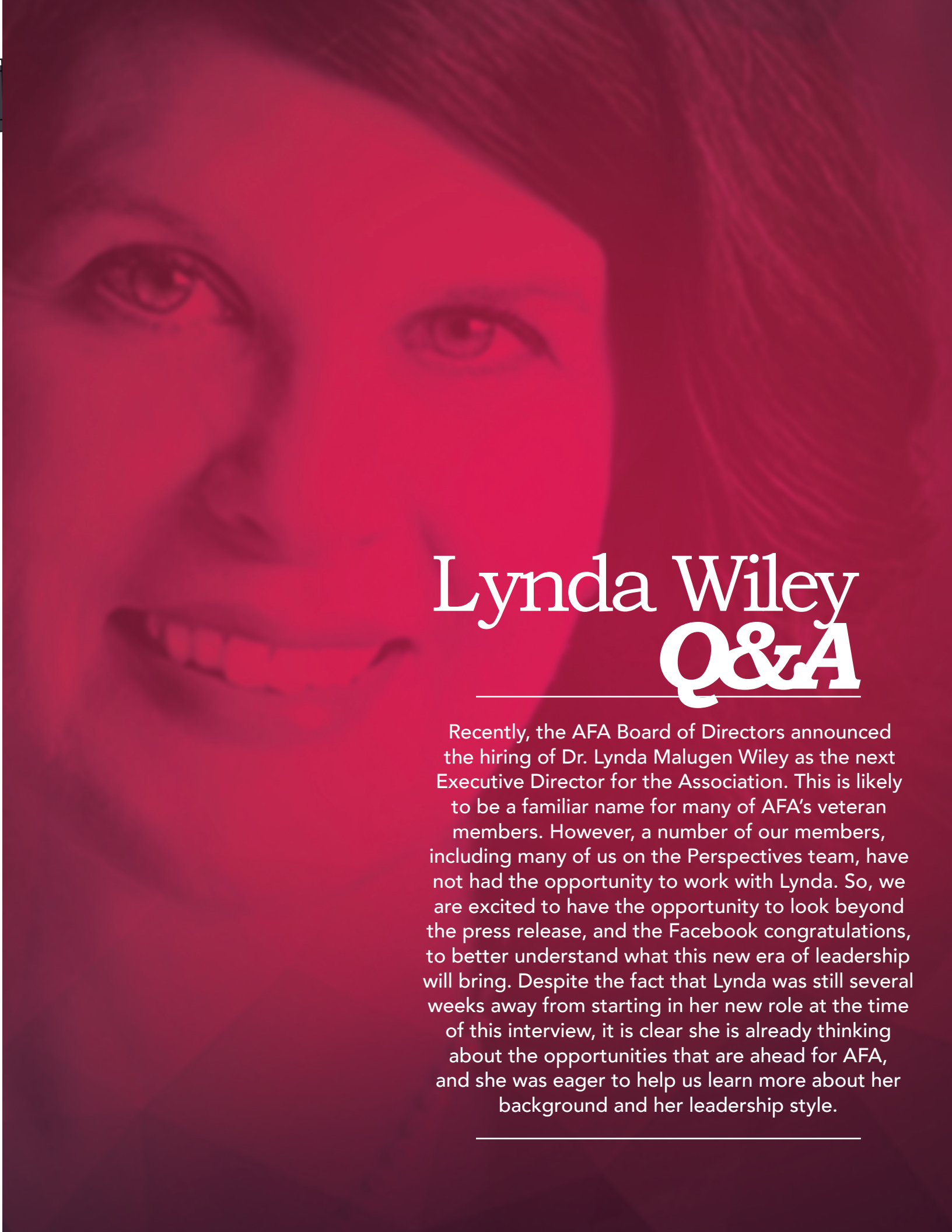

Lynda Wiley Q&A

Recently, the AFA Board of Directors announced the hiring of Dr. Lynda Malugen Wiley as the next Executive Director for the Association. This is likely to be a familiar name for many of AFA's veteran members. However, a number of our members, including many of us on the Perspectives team, have not had the opportunity to work with Lynda. So, we are excited to have the opportunity to look beyond the press release, and the Facebook congratulations, to better understand what this new era of leadership will bring. Despite the fact that Lynda was still several weeks away from starting in her new role at the time of this interview, it is clear she is already thinking about the opportunities that are ahead for AFA, and she was eager to help us learn more about her background and her leadership style.

Meet Lynda

First: **Here is a little bit about her background and experience.**

She began her career in higher education in 1997, in a role many AFA members can identify with, as the Assistant Director of Leadership and Service Programs at Ball State University. She served as the primary advisor to the Panhellenic Council sororities and the National Pan-hellenic Council fraternities and sororities. In 2011, she was named as an Associate Vice President at Ball State, with areas of responsibility that included fraternities and sororities, student organizations, leadership development, multicultural and diversity programs, disability services, student legal services, student programs, and the student union.

Lynda has had years of involvement among the AFA and interfraternal volunteer ranks. She began serving the Association in 1995 as a graduate student. She served as a member of several committees and as the Indiana Area Coordinator. In 2001, she was elected to serve as the Region III Vice President. She also served on the executive board for Gamma Sigma Alpha National Academic Greek Honor Society where she was the secretary and president.

Lynda holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Missouri, where she became a member of Kappa Alpha Theta. She received a Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling/Student Affairs from Southeast Missouri State University and a Doctor of Education in Adult, Higher and Community Education from Ball State University. She currently serves as a recruitment advisor for the Kappa Alpha Theta chapter at Ohio Wesleyan University and as the membership coordinator for the Columbus alumnae chapter.

PERSPECTIVES:
What are some experiences from your career you think will transfer to your new role with AFA?

LW: I believe my career in higher education and association leadership has served me well as I begin this position. I began my career as a primary fraternity/sorority advisor, so I understand the everyday challenges and rewards our members experience. As a senior student affairs leader, I was able to examine the broader context of student affairs and help make policy decisions that impacted all students, including fraternity and sorority members. My volunteer involvement with AFA and Kappa Alpha Theta has broadened my lens and helped me appreciate the role of staff and volunteers.

PERSPECTIVES:
When you think about the future of AFA what are the opportunities that excite you?

LW: The future of AFA is bright. There is so much being asked professionally of campus advisors, headquarters staff, and volunteer advisors, and I believe AFA is the best resource to equip those individuals with the information and professional development they need. There has always been the need for continued education and understanding of the student experience in terms of fraternity/sorority membership. I find this time particularly exciting because the modes of delivery are endless, and we can tailor the educational experience to best meet the members' needs. We also have dynamic and knowledgeable volunteer boards for both AFA and the AFA Foundation, and that leadership is part of what drew me to the position.

PERSPECTIVES:

We exist in the continually evolving environment of higher education. How do you envision AFA working to help its members effectively respond to the changing world around them?

LW: I think one of the best things AFA can do is to help our members articulate their invaluable role in shaping the undergraduate fraternity/sorority experience. We live in a world where research, big data, and analytics can be shaped into stories, and if our members can get access to the right data, they will have a powerful story to tell. Our collegiate members are typically retained at a higher percentage, are more satisfied with their college experience, and are more likely to graduate. We need to better leverage this information to illustrate the success our members achieve during their collegiate experience and beyond as professionals and community members.

We also need to be honest about the community's challenges. We must confront those challenges, and we must prepare our members to be the most knowledgeable person in the room in the discussion of how to address those challenges. The work of AFA and the AFA Foundation is central to ensuring that our members can articulate the value they bring and the value the fraternity/sorority experience brings to the campus. Now, more than ever, the association's role in advocating for both the professional and the profession has taken on greater relevance. I fully understand that, and I am excited to tell our story.

PERSPECTIVES:

How can the members of AFA help to set you up for success as the Executive Director?

LW: Feedback! I am committed to improving the membership experience and providing our members with the resources they need to be successful. I would rather know something is not working rather than have it fester to a point where we have a problem. I realize many members view their involvement personally and consider each other close friends, allies, and confidants. I appreciate that connection, and I want to harness the value of our relationships to create an environment within AFA which helps us all to show up as our best selves toward serving the purpose we all share.

"Now, more than ever, the Association's role in advocating for both the professional and the profession has taken on greater relevance.

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